



हरिः कर्ता
Thy will be done



DIVYA JIVAN SANSKRUTIK SANGH
AHMEDABAD

A WORD TO INTRODUCE

Absolutely un-pre-mediated, showered with totally unintentional, selfless motive, Poojya Swamiji's benevolent benediction resulted in Devotees of Gujarat gathered at Sivananda Ashram, Jodhpur Tekri, Ahmedabad getting an unprecedented occasion of felicitating Poojya Swami Chidanandji on his entry in 80th year of his earthly existence.

To rise to the occasion we are bringing out a unique Souvenir depicting 80 episodes of Swamiji's holy sojourn on this planet. We are hopeful of devotees treasuring this photo-album where his characteristic poses bring to our imagination Swamiji's lovable personality.

We will be failing in our duty if we do not profusely thank late Sri Sharachandra Behera, Mother Yvonne Lebeau, Mother Prem Wahi, and Editors of Swamiji's 60th year-Diamond Jubilee-Commemoration volume and last but not the least Swami Adhyatmanandaji and Sri Jayant Dave for providing inspiring episodes of Swamiji's life, presented here in our Souvenir Volume, Harih Karta-Thy will be done.

We pray, along with all devotees of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and his living replica-Poojya Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for further long, healthy, benevolent life of Swamiji Maharaj, so that we can trudge along the path to God-Realisation.

**Devotees of worshipful
Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj**

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A token GURUSEVA on the occasion
of 80th Birth Anniversary of
H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandji Maharaj,
President, Divine Life Society,
Sivanandnagar, Rishikesh, U.P.
(INDIA) 249192.

This World Wide Web Edition does not contain the photo-album.
WWW site: <http://www.rsl.ukans.edu/~pkanagar/divine/>

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भावाञ्जलिः

परमवन्दनीयं गुरुवर्यं श्रीचिदानन्दस्वामिनं
अशीतितमे जन्मदिने

कर्णावत्यां शुबस्थाने श्रीचिदानन्दस्वामिनः ।
अशीतिजतः प्रियशिष्यैः अशीत्यब्द महोत्सवः ॥ १ ॥

अशीतितमवर्षस्य गुरुवर्यस्य योगिनः ।
प्रारम्भे सर्वशिष्याणां हृदि हर्षः प्रजायते ॥ २ ॥

गुरुदेवमभिवन्द्य प्रार्थये परमेश्वरम् ।
शान्तिपूर्णं निरामयं स्वामिनः दीर्घजीवनम् ॥ ३ ॥

गुरोः शताब्दमालक्ष्य दशकं घोषितं दिव्यम् ।
विदेशे भारते चैव भूताः येन शुभोत्सवाः ॥ ४ ॥

अहंभावरहितं च गुरुपादसमर्पितम् ।
शान्तं ब्रह्मस्वरूपं तं चिदानन्दं नमाम्यहम् ॥ ५ ॥

वर्तते करुणा यस्य विश्वेऽस्मिन् सर्वजन्तुषु ।
सर्वत्र च कृतं येन नारायणस्य दर्शनम् ॥ ६ ॥

ब्रह्मानन्दमनुभूय संसारे त्रिगुणात्मके ।
साक्षिभावे सिथतः स्वामी शिवानन्दप्रसादतः ॥ ७ ॥

प्रत्यक्षः स्थितप्रज्ञोऽसौ गीतायां यः प्रकीर्तितः ।
समत्वयोगयुक्तं तं कृपाप्राप्त्यै नमाम्यहम् ॥ ८ ॥

bhāvāñjaliḥ

paramavandanīyaṃ guruvaryaṃ śrīcidānandasvāmināṃ
aśītītame janmadine

karnāvatyāṃ śubasthāne śrīcidānandasvāmināḥ |
aśītījataḥ priyaśiṣyaiḥ aśītyabda mahotsavaḥ || 1 ||

aśītītamavarṣasya guruvaryasya yogināḥ |
prārambhe sarvaśiṣyāṇāṃ ḥṛdi harṣaḥ prajāyate || 2 ||

gurudevamabhivandya prārthaye parameśvaram |
śāntipūrṇaṃ nirāmayāṃ svāmināḥ dīrghajīvanam || 3 ||

guroḥ śatābdamālakṣya daśakaṃ ghoṣitaṃ divyam |
videśe bhārate caiva bhūtāḥ yena śubhotsavāḥ || 4 ||

ahaṃbhāvarahitaṃ ca gurupādasamarpitaṃ |
śāntaṃ brahmasvarūpaṃ taṃ cidānandaṃ namāmyaham || 5 ||

vartate karuṇā yasya viśve.asmin sarvajantuṣu |
sarvatra ca kṛtaṃ yena nārāyaṇasya darśanam || 6 ||

brahmānandamanubhūya saṃsāre triguṇātmake |
sākṣibhāve sithataḥ svāmī śivānandaprasādataḥ || 7 ||

pratyakṣaḥ sthitaprajño.asau gītāyāṃ yaḥ prakīrtitaḥ |
samatvayogayuktaṃ taṃ kṛpāprāptyai namāmyaham || 8 ||

BHAVANJALI

On the Eightieth birthday of the Most Worshipful Gurudev Swami Sri Chidanandaji

In auspicious Karnavati city (Ahmedabad, Gujarat) celebration of eightieth birthday of Swami Chidanandaji has been arranged by his dear disciples. (1)

On this occasion of eightieth birthday of the Master, the hearts of all the disciples are filled with joy. (2)

Prostrating to Gurudev we pray to the Lord for health and peaceful long life of Sri Swamiji. (3)

He celebrated centenary of Gurudev, he proclaimed the Divine Decade underwhich programmes are arranged in India and abroad. (4)

Prostrations to Chidananda, who is egoless, serene and is one with the Absolute, who has dedicated himself at the feet of Gurudev. (5)

Who sees Narayana everywhere, who has compassion for all the beings. (6)

Who has realised the Bliss absolute with the grace of Sivananda, who is merely a witness to the *Samsara* characterised by the three *Gunas*. (7)

Who is embodiment of *Sthitaprajna* of Gita, who has ever evenness of mind, to him I prostrate and beg his grace. (8)

Smt. Pramila D. Shingala

GOD IS TRUTH



8. 9. '95

Blessings

The Ahmedabad Sivananda Ashram, Jodhpur Tekri is bringing out a special brochure of inspiring and instructive incidents upon the occasion of my forth coming visit to the city. I am very happy that something happy and helpful is being given as Guru Jnana Prasad during my stay there. May this special Brochure prove very helpful to numerous seekers and sadhaks.

I congratulate Swami Adhyatmanandaji for the laudable effort. God Bless him and all!

Swami Chidananda



*Sivananda Ashram,
Rishikesh.*

SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDAJI

Swami Chidananda was born as Sridhar Rao in Mangalore, South India on September 24, 1916, the first son of an orthodox Hindu Brahmin family. When he was sixteen, he shifted to Madras where, in 1938, he graduated with a B.A. from the prestigious Loyola College. During these years, devotional songs and stories from the scriptures, as well as the lives and teachings of modern saints such as Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Ramana Maharshi and Swami Ramdas awakened in him a fiery aspiration for the life spiritual.

In 1943 he joined the Himalayan Ashram of the sage and saint Swami Sivananda, the founder of the Divine Life Society, whose dynamic spiritual writings had long attracted him. Soon he was put in charge of the Sivananda Ashram medical dispensary, where his compassionate service to all, including the lepers, earned him the affectionate title of Dr. Raoji. He also headed up the Correspondence Section and was frequently called upon to give lectures as well as attend to the special needs of many of the guests. In 1948 he was appointed General Secretary of the Society and on Guru Purnima, 1949, was initiated into the holy order of *Sannyasa*.

Ten years later, in 1959, in response to many requests, Swami Sivananda sent him to the West, a trip that lasted for over two years. Succeeding Swami Sivananda as President of the Divine Life Society in 1963, his life since has been one of almost continuous travel throughout India and to all continents of the globe in the holy Master's service and in the cause of the central objective of the Divine Life Society, dissemination of spiritual knowledge. In 1993 he delivered an inspiring lecture on the 'Genuine Authentic Religion We Need To-day', at the Parliament of World Religions, held at Chicago, U.S.A.

He has given a clarion call of Divine Decade (1991-2000) for spiritual uplift of the mankind while proceeding from 20th century to 21st century which significantly is also a transition from 2nd millennium to 3rd millennium.

Although, in his travels, he is frequently received by high dignitaries and he is the head of an institution with many branches both in India and abroad, yet he still remains at heart a simple monk, whose aim in life is to do as much good as possible for as many people as possible and, above all, bring to them the heart-solacing and liberating message of Yoga, Vedanta and living of a Divine Life.



MESSAGE

Om Sri Satguru Paramatmane Namah!

May the divine grace of the Supreme Almighty Being and the choicest *Ashirwad* of *Gurudev* Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj be upon you all.

It is with great joy that I learn about the special brochure which is being printed by Ahmedabad Sivananda Ashram and Divine Life Society branches, for the occasion of this servant's visit to Ahmedabad in the fourth week of September, 1995.

I am happy to know that the brochure will contain a collection of Instructive Events from Swami Chidananda's life plus some suitable illustrations. I wish this publication all success. With whatever good objectives and auspicious intentions it is being published, I pray to *Gurudev* to fulfil those intentions and objectives by His gracious blessings, for the benefit of all sincere spiritual seekers and aspirants of the Divine Life.

Guru-bhakti and *Guru-seva* are important factors in spiritual life. *Guru-bhakti* is devotion to the *Guru*. It helps to free the disciples from earthly attachments to other worldly things and beings. *Guru-seva* or service of the *Guru* when properly done is effective in remedying selfishness, laziness and cravings for comfort in the spiritual *Sadhaks*. True *Guru-bhakti* is in obeying and following the *Upadesh* and instructions of your *Guru*. Real *Guru-seva* is to live your life and conduct yourself in such a manner that your life and personal *Vyavahara* bring good name to the *Guru*. It raises the *Guru's* reputation to higher heights and makes your *Guru* enshrined forever in the memory of all men. Best *Guru-dakshina* that can be offered to any *Guru* is a life lived in accordance with *Guru's* teachings. A tree is known by its fruits. A flower is known through its fragrance. A country is known by its citizens. A father is known by the nature and behaviour of his son. A teacher is known by his students. This is the popular belief in human society. Hence, the devotees and disciples of any holy person must try their utmost best to make themselves the embodiments of that holy person's teachings and reflect *Guru-upadesha* in their own day-to-day life.

May this special brochure, of Ahmedabad Divine Life Society, inspire and induce all devotees and *Sadhaks* to do likewise, upon the above indicated lines. May this publication be a source of enthusiasm, new resolution and renewal in the lives of those who read it. May God bless everyone of you. May His choicest blessings be upon this brochure, as well as upon those who have assisted in preparing it as also upon the readers thereof. Greetings and Happy Birthday to everyone and all of you!

Jai Sri Gurudev Sivananda! Hari Om Tat Sat!

—*Swami Chidanand*

MASTER APPRECIATES

Celebration of Swami Chidanandaji's Birthday is really worship of God.

During the celebrations of the Birthdays of great men you hear of their actions, their thoughts and their instructions, and the way in which they led their life. You imbibe several good qualities from their glorious example. You try to emulate them. You put those qualities into practice in your daily life.

Frequent Birthday celebrations are necessary. Constantly hammering of sublime ideas on the mind is necessary. Your mind will otherwise run in its own old grooves. Through daily *Japa* you will have to bring it under control. Regularity is a very important thing.

But you always forget these important things of life. You don't forget the minute items of your food, but you forget God. An ounce of practice is better than tons of theory.

You have a sin-hardened heart that commits various misdeeds. It has to be made soft as butter, by the practice of compassion. A man may deliver lectures for hours together, but if you don't find compassion and humility in him shun him.

Compassion and humility Swami Chidanandaji has got in abundance. In the previous birth itself he was a Sannyasin; from the way in which he behaves we can find that out.

Practise compassion, service, humility and other virtues. Then shine like our Chidanandaji. This is my fervent prayer !

Chidananda is a *Jeevanmukta*, a great saint, an ideal Yogi, a *Para Bhakta* and a great sage. Swami Chidananda is all this and much more He was born to fulfil a great mission. He is the torch-bearer of my mission.

—*Swami Sivananda*

A LIVING LEGACY OF GURUDEV

You are one of those rare souls who have successfully moved unscathed and uncontaminated through the colours and sounds and movements of a world of many a distraction through which you fearlessly tour and tirelessly work to raise the despondent spirits of large masses of people and to instil hope and confidence in their hearts, to remove even their social tensions and solve their personal problems, and, above all, to give them spiritual comfort to bless them with that power of understanding by which they would be able to walk on the path of the Higher Life.

The legacy which you have imbibed from *Gurudev* Sivanand is one hundred percent. We see in you all the miraculous and wondrous character of the *Gurudev*.

—Swami Krishnananda

DWELLS IN THE HEARTS OF MILLIONS

Swami Chidananda was born eighty years ago of very wealthy parents in South India. His father was a very big landlord; but he is today the lord of people in many lands. He was born in a palace; he dwells in the hearts of millions today, though he has no brick and mortar home to call his own!

The renunciation is natural to you; it is daily and hourly fact of your life. Therefore you are totally free, unattached and untainted. You have toured around the world a number of times, you are worshipped by thousands and thousands all over the world; yet, you shine as a *Mahatyagi*, completely independent of all. But you are not ‘aloof’. You have demonstrated in your own life that the spirit of renunciation need not, does not, should not result in cool indifference or aloofness; on the contrary the spirit of renunciation becomes meaningless if compassion does not arise as the very radiance of the spirit."

—Swami Venkatesanada

LIKE WHAT VIVEKANANDA WAS TO SHRI RAMKRISHNA

History repeats itself! Bhagavan Sri Ramkrishna Paramahansa, the great *Avatara* of the 19th Century, had Swami Vivekananda as his illustrious disciple to carry his universal message to various parts of the world; they were both entirely responsible for the modern renaissance of the ancient Indian Culture. We can now safely state that Gurudev Swami Sivananda is the *Avatara* of the 20th Century and has spread the self-same culture in his inimitable way; and his chosen disciple, Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, has disseminated on a world-wide basis, the ethical and spiritual idealism of India as propounded by the Worshipful Master. “What Vivekananda was to Sri Ramkrishna, Chidananda is to Gurudev Sivananda.”

—Swami Pranavanandaji, Malaysia

WHOSE SMILE RADIATES PEACE AND BLISS

His face beams with the beauty of his heart and his heart shines with the love and light of his soul. His smile goes for miles and miles radiating peace and bliss.

His life is a sincere dedication to the service of Sivananda. Dropping down his personality the impersonal Sivananda disappeared into the unknown beyond; but his spirit, his inner genius lives in the heart of Chidananda and fulfils in full today, in the actual life of humanity, what he wrote for humanity for so many decades. Sivananda chalked out the Gospel of divine existence and Chidananda speaks it out. Sivananda left a gap in the spiritual world and we are now glad that Mahatma Chidanandaji has nobly filled it. The spirit of the Master impels his heart and brain to dynamic world-wide Divine Life service.

—*Karm-Yogi Shuddhananda, Bharti*

A MODERN ST. FRANCIS ASSISI

Through his living experience, he has blended the glorious Christian truths with the ancient ones expressed in the Indian scriptures, thus demonstrating that all is one. An example of this living synthesis is the fact that when he tours in the West, garbed in the ochre robes characteristic of the traditional Swami order, many hearts respond to him, because of his humility and universal love for all living things, as to a modern St. Francis of Assisi.

The secret of his personal magnetism lies in the utter simplicity of his nature, in his firm faith in God and man and in his own Guru and in his deep sense of service and sacrifice.

—*Swami Satchidananda, U.S.A.*

SELF-EFFACING HUMILITY INCARNATE

No more enigmatic character can be conceived, for many are the puzzling points of contrast in his character. An eminent saint at the head of a world-wide society, Swami Chidananda is still self-effacing humility incarnate, like Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Still he relishes to be taken as the first servant wherever he goes. With the least intake of food, his output of work is maximum. In India or abroad, he has no rest whatsoever, relaxation remaining ever foreign to him. He works hard seeing people incessantly, receiving visitors from all over the world, giving personal guidance to seekers, attending to heavy correspondence, besides looking into administrative problems. His experience in fasting has given him power over his body, which he never considers his.

—*Swami Arpanananda*

LIVING THE DOCTRINE OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

In these simple and easy six steps, Serve, Love, Give, Purity, Meditate, Realise - Swami Sivanandaji has given to mankind the extract of his own *Sadhana* and achievements. Who can give such simple but effective formulae but for a great soul like him! This is but the proof apparent of his great stage of evolution. That is what I call Sivanandaism, though Sivananda himself did not affiliate himself with any 'ism'. This is what he practised and taught all through his life, so that all can follow the same. Sivananda's doctrine is and must be the creed of his disciples. At present it is as clear as day light that Sivananda's gospel is in practice in the life of Swami Chidananda.

—Swami Yajnavalkyananda

PERSONIFICATION OF EVERYTHING GOOD

When I first met him a few years ago, I was instinctively drawn to him because of the disarming, charming and endearing ways of his affections and of his sincerity in his utterances in respect of the well-being of mankind. He is the personification of everything good, goodness as prescribed by our *Gurudev*. The gentility of his ways of saying and doing things at all times is indeed so joyful to one's soul. I very strongly ask every person of any age, of any class, of any community and creed who is eager to serve mankind, to read a little pamphlet containing the messages of Swami Chidanandaji to mankind, as these messages are so broad-minded and so practical to implement.

—Gen. K.M. Cariappa, (Retd.)

SPIRITUAL DOCTOR

On one occasion I went to Swamiji and told him that with so many base thoughts I was unfit for the Ashram life, and as such, I must be permitted to go back home. To this Swamiji replied, "Because you have got all these drawbacks you are eminently fit for the Ashram life. When you are sick, what will you do? You will go and consult a doctor, join the hospital, take the prescribed medicine and follow the dietetic restrictions. Once you join the Hospital, you must do whatever the doctor says, and having faith in him, you must completely free yourself from all worries and anxieties. In a like manner, the moment you detect such base thoughts in you, you must go to a Guru, take his advice, do whatever he says and, above all, have faith in him and surrender to him completely, and the recovery is bound to follow."

—An Ashramite

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

O Adorable Lord of Mercy and Love!
Salutations and Prostrations unto Thee.
Thou art Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient.
Thou art *Satchidananda*.
Thou art the Indweller of all beings.

Grant us an understanding heart,
Equal vision, balanced mind,
Faith, devotion and wisdom.
Grant us inner spiritual strength
to resist temptations and to control the mind.
Free us from egoism, lust, greed, hatred, anger and jealousy.
Fill our hearts with divine virtues.

Let us behold Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us serve Thee in all these names and forms
Let us ever remember Thee.
Let us ever sing Thy glories.
Let Thy name be ever on our lips.
Let us abide in Thee for ever and ever.

—Swami Sivananda

INSPIRING EVENTS

1. KODANDA RAMA

After the holy occasion of Sridhara's sacred thread ceremony, when all were returning from Tirupati Sridhar (*Poorvashram* name of Swamiji) felt drawn by a beautiful idol of Sri Rama in one of the shops and beseeched his parents to buy the image for him. The parents were happy to hear the request and bought for him the wooden idol of Sridhar Sri Kodanda Rama.

Thereafter Sri Kodanda Rama was to occupy a central place in the children's life in the house. The idol was installed by the side of the family deity and offered ceremonial worship on all important occasions. Sridhara was now found to be very meticulous in observing spiritual discipline and rituals of worship. Daily he used to sit down at the feet of Sri Kodanda Rama, in the company of his aunts, brother and sisters and offer his prayerful worship. A miraculous thing came to be observed at the time of Sridhara's worship. When he used to offer flowers to the Lord, apply fragrant sandal and vermilion to His forehead and light the lamp before Him, the idol seemed to shine with an extraordinary effulgent halo and a celestial smile used to wreath the divine countenance. The young devotees could see this almost everyday and they were thrilled with joy at this manifestation of divine grace.

The image is still being worshipped at the residence of Srimati Malati Bai Govind Rao at Jagir House, 213, Raja Street, Coimbatore. Malati Bai Mataji is herself convinced that the idol has an undoubted potency and mitigates the misfortunes of her family whenever they seek His protection.

2. WORK IS WORSHIP

During those early days *Sivananda Ashram* was a veritable hermitage. *Sridhar* used to share the work of sweeping the floors, looking after guests and patients, help filling the tank with water from the Ganges, spreading carpet on the floor, getting firewood from the forest, washing vessels and serving in the kitchen, conducting worship in the temple and also writing letters, typing manuscripts and delivering elevating talks in the evening Satsangs and other religious functions. With all these duties he remained serene and spiritually vibrant all the time, for work itself was his manner of offering worship.

3. GENIUS LIVES THE BEGINNERS' WAY

Sridhar always remembered the famous expression of Totapuri that in order that its lustre is maintained the brass pot has to be rubbed everyday. Like *Gurudev* he used to emphasize, "The body is always a donkey and the mind a monkey to the last. So the *Adhyatmic* whip and the cane of *Titiksha*, *Tapasya* etc. must be kept in readiness always". Similarly he was one in opinion with *Gurudev* who would frequently warn, "Even if you are a *Jivanmukta*, you must be careful." Rao Swamiji, so ran the verdict of *Gurudev*, was a born *Siddha*. Yet he always thought of himself as only a beginner, just stepping into the spiritual field. So he took resort to periodical fasts, sudden acts of personal denial and endurance.

Endurance was a quality that *Sridhara* had assiduously cultivated and possessed in abundance even before he came to the *Ashram*. Yet not a day elapsed when he did not expose himself to some gruelling test or the other, for *Titiksha* is the real wealth of an ascetic. In *Gita* the Lord exhorts the aspirant to put up with pleasure and pain, heat and cold with equanimity, for they are equally transitory.

4. SRIDHARA NAMED CHIDANANDA

His selfless service of the sick had earned for him the love, admiration and gratitude of the people of the neighbourhood. And now his spiritual fervour and wisdom won for him the reverence of the saints of Rishikesh. But with all that Swamiji still used to say in great humility that he was not yet qualified to don the saffron garb. All the same *Gurudev* felt happily impelled to confer that insignia of supreme sacrifice on *Sridhara* with the befitting title, Swami Chidananda, the one who is ever established in bliss and enlightenment. *Gurudev* always used to sing—"I am Chidananda. I am Chidananda. I am Chidananda. In all conditions I am knowledge, bliss absolute." He identified himself with Chidananda. Accordingly he christened his most beloved disciple. The new monastic name was only a formal recognition for the young monk who seemed to have long achieved that state. Thus was it that on the most holy *Guru Purnima* day - 10th July, 1949—a most significant day in the calendar of the Divine Life Society and of the world, in a formal ceremony of great solemnity

Sridhara renounced the pleasures of this world and of the next and entered into the holy order of the *Sannyas* of the line of *Saraswati*.

5. LORD'S NAME - THE BEST REMEDY

Sometimes Dr. Raoji's healing touch worked miracles. Once on a dark summer night an old lady appeared before him with her little girl who had been stung by a poisonous scorpion. The compassionate one immediately called her to his *Kutir* and led her by the flash of his torch. He did not have to apply any medicine. He only rubbed his little towel on the affected part chanting all the while the Lord's Names on his lips. The girl was instantaneously cured. Such was the power of love generated by the compassionate doctor that even poison lost its virulence.

6. PRISM DISPERSES THE LIGHT

Swamiji's '*Light Fountain*' - a biographical piece on his Master which will for ever be read by all inquisitive readers as an incomparable spiritual document—bears thrilling witness to his deep appreciation of *Gurudev*. It is a masterful biographical writing distinguished by a purity of style, musical organisation, and profound knowledge of its subject. The entirely unobtrusive manner of its presentation makes the reader always encounter in the pages *Sivananda* and not the author. *Gurudev* himself was so much impressed by the spiritual fervour and wisdom contained in the book that he remarked, "Sivananda will pass away but '*Light Fountain*' will live". While releasing the book in 1944 Swamiji had chosen to keep the authorship concealed under the pseudonym, *Prism*. Chidananda is, indeed, the holy prism through which *Gurudev* had chosen to reveal his multicoloured personality for the benefit of the world.

7. "VETERINARY DOCTOR"

One day Dr. Raoji noticed a dog lying near the office room of the Ashram. It was full of sores and worms. It was clear that it had been in agony for some time. The tender heart of Rao Swamiji bled at the pathetic sight. He gave some medicines and injections and dressed its affected parts with proper bandage and slept near the dog tending it the whole night. When the Ashramites saw this in the morning they were simply dazed. *Gurudev* remarked that Rao Swamiji was not a man but the very embodiment of compassion.

8. LOVING ALL LIVING BEINGS

One day an enthusiastic Brahmachari devotee was distributing Prasad. He was upset to find ants infecting and relishing Prasad of pleasant sweets. He was found trying to spread the Prasad and get away with ants. At this Swamiji instantly intervened saying why deprive the ants from being blessed with Prasad. Swamiji advised him to leave the Prasad in 'as is where is' condition and bring some new Prasad for distributing to the devotees.

9. RENDERING THE FIRST HAND SERVICE

Swamiji never missed any occasion of helping the poor and the sick in course of his Parivrajaka life. Near Tirukoilur, while traveling in a bus he saw an old lady who was destitute and

blind. He immediately got down from the bus and enquired about her difficulties. He approached a Roman Catholic Priest and some Policemen and ensured for the poor woman the necessary help before leaving the place. While he was thus engaged in acts of service it would have been difficult for one to think that he was a Parivrajaka Swami from the Himalayas. Such acts of compassion have been one of the most dazzling hallmarks of his personality. Whether he was in the New World of America or engaged in the duties of Sivanandashram or in the far south moving incognito as a lonely pilgrim, he never ignored an opportunity of serving God in the poor and the sick.

10. GURUDEV TAKES GANGA OFFSHORE

During his epoch-making 1950, All India tour Gurudev had carried with him the sacred water of holy Ganges from Gangotri to bathe Lord Siva in his blessed shrine at *Ramesvaram* in the far south. While addressing the seekers at Faizabad Swami Chidananda made a reference to it and brought forth its inner spiritual import and commented that externally the Holy Master was carrying the Ganga Jal from the sources of the Ganges to offer it to Ramesvara: but by this symbolically he was taking the waters of *Jnana Ganga* from the very source, his own *Atma Jnana*, to flood the entire country.

11. CARING FOR FELLOW-BEINGS

Once the All India Divine Life Society Conference was organised at Bhavaniputra (Orissa). Normally everyone comes earlier and Sri Swamiji is the last person to arrive at the camp. But this time from Sonabada Swamiji arrived earlier than other Mahatmas and Guest Speakers. Immediately after reaching his camp-residence he inquired, about the whereabouts of other Mahatmas. Swamiji desired to see their accommodation personally to satisfy himself about the arrangements.

Swamiji indeed is knower of the Self. When he arrived at other Mahatmas guest house, the place was found very shabby, full of stink and dirt. At once without wasting any time he found out a broom and started sweeping the floor and then cleaning the bathrooms. He was state guest of Orissa and is worshipped as Sri Chidananda Mahaprabhu like Sri Jagannath Mahaprabhu and Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

It is only because of his feelings for fellow beings, his reverence for smallest one, which for him is the reverence to Almighty Lord. He sees, perceives and experiences nothing else but God at all times, and at all places.

12. THE SCULPTURE OWES IT TO THE SCULPTOR

The thirty-ninth birthday of Swami Chidananda, in particular, was celebrated at the behest of the Holy Master with grand, festive rejoicings and great solemnity. Gurudev declared on this occasion, “Celebration of Swami Chidanandaji’s birthday is really worship of God.” He acknowledged Swamiji’s attainment of the highest knowledge and honoured him with the sacred title of ‘*Adhyatma Jnana Jyoti*’, an embodiment of the Brahma Sutras and the Gita, who brought Upanishads from his heart. He made it open to all that the present life of Chidananda was his last birth. He went to the extent to say, “Even I revere him as my *Guru*”.

Swamiji was hailed by the devotees and seekers as Divinity incarnate. In his answer to the felicitations he said that he humbly accepted all their kind wishes and comments, and then emphasized that all that was only *Guru Kripa*. He likened himself to a piece of sculpture and said that if at all there was any beauty in the statue, the credit was to go to the sculptor. He concluded by saying, “The divine engineer of Swami Chidananda is Swami Sivananda.”

13. SIMPLIFYING THE YOGA TEACHING

Swami Chidanandaji was always keen to innovate and project the eternal truths in novel and interesting forms so as to attract the ordinary people towards the path of the Yoga of Synthesis. For example, he developed the idea of establishing a spiritual museum so that the most important matters of Yoga could be projected interestingly through various tokens, books or pictures, and inquisitive visitors could be conducted through the hall by a trained guide. He wished that a visit into the museum could be a digest course on *Sadhana*. The necessary materials for giving shape to the museum for the benefit of neophytes in Yoga were zealously collected by Swamiji himself and arranged neatly. Intricate lessons of Raja Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Kundalini Yoga, Japa Yoga and *Tantra Yoga* were illustrated with the aid of pictorial representations and thus the *Yoga Museum* was born in 1947.

14. ELEVATION IN WORK PROFILE

It was, of course, easy for Gurudev to correctly gauge the unique and exalted state of his most beloved disciple. Very soon he announced, “Rao Swamiji should be relieved of all the work. But I want him to hold the high office of the General Secretary. It is a great honour for the society itself to have such a great saint as a General Secretary”.

15. SIMPLE BUT REVEALING

On 2nd December, 1959 Swamiji made his first appearance on a television network in the U.S.A. and spoke over the radio soon after on the gospel of Divine Life. He pointed out that truth, nonviolence and purity are the essence of religion and spirituality. They are the essence of Yoga and Vedanta. Selfless service, universal love, charity, purity, devotion and meditation will automatically, unfailingly lead to illumination and self-realisation.

16. TEACHING BY BEING

Men gazed at him with wonder and reverence, and muttered in admiration: here is a Godman who lives his teachings even more than he preaches it. Swamiji’s personality, radiating the glow of holy penance, was captivating and irresistible. A renowned seeker of Ceylon, Bhakta Paduka, aptly observed, “Within the lovable and delicate form and appearance of this Mahatma, we see there a determination of the holy purpose of his mission in life, steelminded and soldierly spiritual discipline, deep abhorrence for anything sordid, unbecoming or mean, and above all his humility, truthfulness and transparent sincerity.

17. VERILY DIVINE GRACE

From Ndola (Africa) Swamiji was to leave for Mombasa. Now, a very interesting event happened, in Kenya. He was scheduled to reach Mombasa that afternoon on the 17th November and address a public meeting the same evening. But it was found that there was no direct flight to Mombasa from Ndola. He was required to proceed to Dar-es-Salam. It seemed as if the Mombasa programme was destined to be postponed, if not given up. But the organisers at Mombasa had already given wide publicity to the evening programme of Swamiji and a huge mass of devoted people was to face a sorry disappointment. As the organisers there were cheerfully going about with their preparations Swamiji was still in the air, his plane heading for the Tanzanian capital, Dar-es-Salam. Now a miracle happened. When the plane approached the Dar-es-Salam air port, the ground control refused permission to the pilot for landing, saying that recent rains had made the air field temporarily unsafe. The pilot was instructed to proceed instead to Mombasa air port. Thus the Zambian Airway jet flew on and landed at the Kenyan air port of Mombasa. The prayer of the devotees of Mombasa had been heard and the unexpected had taken place. Swamiji reached Mombasa in time to start the programme exactly on schedule as though the flight had been planned for it. On his landing at Mombasa Swamiji thanked God and told the devotees, “This is but one of the many ways at many times that the mysterious working of Gurudev’s grace has been manifesting itself throughout”.

18. CLEANING THE DIRT

At circuit house Gandhinagar, Gujarat, once Swamiji was given cordial warm reception by Smt. Sharada Mukherji, the then Governor of Gujarat. Swamiji and other dignitaries were climbing up the stair-case when one sweeper who was coming down from stairs just moved away from him. But Sri Swamiji went to him, asked his welfare, gave him some *Prasad* and told him, “Do not fear, we both are in the same profession. You are cleaning outside and I am cleaning inside; you sweep external dirt, whereas I sweep internal dirt.” What a fine example of humility, clarity of concept and awareness of the Self!

19. SPIRITUAL LEADERS MEET

Mr. Pinardes was keen to arrange a meeting between Swamiji and the Pope. It was through his efforts that Pope Paul VI and Swamiji Maharaj met in a semi-private audience on the 19th February, 1969. The Pope was so much filled with love at the very sight of this Indian saint that throwing to the winds the usual Vatican formalities he caught hold of the hands of Swamiji and kept them in his hands for a long time, exchanging words of courtesy with great feeling. He greeted Swamiji in the Indian style and Swamiji responded by greeting the Pope in Western fashion by kneeling down in the name of Gurudev Sivananda. The moment the Pope heard the name of Sivananda he lovingly muttered, “I have heard of your Master’s noble spiritual work. I appreciate very much your holy Master’s spiritual work.” Swamiji presented to the Pope Gurudev’s work **Bliss Divine** as a token of love and regard. The Pope accepted the offering with immense joy and promised that he would read it with interest. During their talk he repeatedly exclaimed, “I love India. I love India,” and said at one stage, “India is a wonderful place. I look forward to visiting India once again”.

20. DIVINE CONSCIOUSNESS IS DIVINE LIFE

Prof. S. P. Olivier, Rector of the University College, Durban, requested Swamiji to give the audience some special instructions. In his elevating talk Swamiji outlined the essentials of divine life and pointed out how one could live the divine life right in the hub of the busiest metropolis. He showed them how a life of true holiness was not at all incompatible with the day to day life of ordinary people; for divine life was simply divine consciousness permeating the human life.

21. BLESSING THE FINAL DISSOLUTION

The protracted solicitations of the devotees of Johannesburg dragged Swamiji there on a long programme. On his arrival at Johannesburg a very touching event took place. An ardent devotee of Swamiji, mother Rose Kagan, popularly known as Sivananda Kausalya had been on the death-bed for quite sometime. Before she fell into a state of coma she had prayed for a final Darshan of His Holiness. It was, however difficult to believe that her desire could be fulfilled. But indeed her prayer was heard. The compassionate Swamiji who knows and responds to the hearts of the devotees was there beside her before she breathed her last. After his arrival at her bed-side, he prayed for sometime and the fortunate lady regained her consciousness for a few moments to behold him sitting by her bed. She greeted Swamiji with folded hands uttering distinctly '*Hari Om*' and with this God remembrance and holy *Darshan* of the divine Guru she left her mortal frame. Fortunate was she indeed, for her funeral rite was also sanctified by the presence of His Holiness.

22. STERN SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE

Once Swamiji reached the Ashram of Ma Anandamayi at Brindavan to attend a *Samyama Saptaha*. When the news of his arrival was carried to the worshipful Mother, she instantly came out to receive him personally. When Swamiji saw her advancing towards him, he at once prostrated himself on the ground. The mother appeared to be taken aback for a brief moment and tenderly protested by saying, "Baba, what are you doing!" Swamiji said nothing, for there was nothing to say. He was merely his usual self—a personification of humility and *Sadachara*. The mother then continued to outline the programme of the function and wanted to know from Swamiji whether he felt it to be "all right". Meekly Swamiji replied, "When Mother is there everything is bound to be all right". At this, Ma burst into a peal of laughter and then in a solemn tone declared. "If there is any deficiency, Baba himself will please set it right. After all, this Ashram also belongs to Baba." In course of their talk she reminded him that the next day was *Ekadasi*, Swamiji politely said that being a participant in the *Samyama Saptaha* he had already enrolled himself in the *Vrat*. The mother intoned, "Oh! Baba is in the eternal state of spiritual discipline." This pithy statement of a God-realized soul of the stature of Ma Anandamayi speaks volumes about Swamiji's inner state of perennial penance. Being what he is, Swamiji does not need to observe fasts and other austerities, Yet he always observes the proper external discipline by way of being an example to other seekers and keeping the physical frame under the permanent rigours of discipline.

23. RAM-NAM YEAR

The deep regard of Swamiji for Gandhiji is brought out from the following lines which he declared on the occasion of the Gandhi centenary celebrations in 1969: "It is a blessed year marking

the centenary of this truly great soul's advent upon earth. To me this Gandhi year really signifies a *Ram-Nam* year as well as a year of truth-speaking, promise-keeping, self-searching, fasting and praying and selfless serving. To me all these mean Gandhiji."

24. EVER READY TO SERVE THE MASTER

Induben Bhatt and Mahesh Bhatt of D.L.S. Bhavnagar once arranged a puppet show during a night *Satsang* at the holy *Samadhi* Shrine of Sri Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

With all enthusiasm they staged a show of life story of Sri Gurudev. Here they showed Sri Gurudev starting a charitable dispensary near Laxman Jhula and that he needed one servant to help the dispensary work. So puppet of Sri Swami Sivanandaji brought a sign-board for publicity of the dispensary as well as to announce his requirement of one servant.

The moment the puppeteer announced - 'Servant wanted', at once from the audience Swamiji Maharaj rushed to the puppet of Sivananda offering himself to become the first servant of the Master.

Though Sri Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was in the form of a puppet, Sri Chidanandaji Maharaj sees GURUDEV himself in it and offers himself as a servant. Swamiji beholds Gurudev at all times, in all conditions, at any place, in any situation.

What a total surrender to the Master !!!

25. SANTA-SAMAGAM

With all his busy schedule round the year, the itinerary extending to distant parts of the globe, Swamiji yet succeeds in wrenching himself free every now and then to be in the company of some saint or other. That is the atmosphere he longs for; at the mental plane that is the world which perhaps he continually inhabits. Nimkaroli Baba, a wonder mystic of North India, a *Hanuman Siddha*, was one such saint for whom Swamiji had very high regard. Swamiji knelt down beside the cot and humbly offered his homage to the Baba and after sometime sang a few Bhajans and Stotras in praise of Lord Hanuman. At the close of Swamiji's *Kirtan* the usually reticent and severe-looking Baba instructed all his disciples to bow down at the feet of Swamiji and declared that if they did not do so, they would miss a unique opportunity of prostrating before an illumined sage of high order. In his inimitable way, Swamiji said that if a person held a flower for a considerable length of time it was natural that the fragrance could be smelt on the palms. Therefore, it was no wonder if the fragrance of Gurudev's virtues was sometimes wafted through him because of his fortunate protracted contact.

* * *

Swamiji never misses the opportunity, if any, of meeting a saint. Public stature, expansion of an institution, name of the sect or number of disciples are matters of no concern to him. A saint, whether he be in a *Muth* or in a forest, in public life or in *Sannyas*, is equally alluring to him. In this

manner he had met Acharya Vinoba Bhave at Paunar and offered him salutations, as he would do to any senior *Sannyasi*.

26. SERVING ALL CREATURES

Swamiji was invited for inauguration of an eye-camp at Surendranagar (Gujarat) by local D.L.S. branch. After the inauguration function organisers took Swamiji for tea and snacks.

The place was on the first floor just under the stair-case. One bitch had given birth to new pups. Naturally bitch never wanted people to pass near by. After tea, Swamiji came down by the stair-case and brought some biscuits for her too. We could see that she was keen to get food but it seemed she was unable to see. Swamiji doubted that she might be blind or a victim of some eye-disorder. Hence Swamiji requested eye surgeon present there to examine her eyes and if necessary to operate on the eyes. But the doctor said that he could operate on human eyes and not on animals. Swamiji kept on insisting and after reaching Rishikesh he sent a telegram requesting to see that the bitch should be operated upon and taken care of.

27. HUMILITY INCARNATE

Akhandanandaji pays homage to Swamiji as the very incarnation of humility. Once while addressing an audience in Haridwar he said, ‘Swami Chidananda is the very embodiment of humility. If any body wishes to behold humility incarnate and learn to be humble, he should approach Chidanandaji. In this age it is rare to find a saint with such remarkable humility.’ Swami Sharananandaji had similar views about Swamiji. Humility is, indeed, the hallmark of Swamiji’s personality, a quality that singles him out in the world of saints as the very incarnation of “*Amanitva*.”

28. ADORING THE MOTHER

Swamiji considers Swami Ramdas and Mother Krishna Bai as one. He has often visited Anandashram to pay his homage to the mother and had her soulful *Satsangs* with her every time. The Mother, too, held him in high esteem and expressed great regard and affection for him. One day towards the end of 1976 Swamiji hurried to Anandashram to meet the Mother who was ailing since November. It was touching to see how in spite of her being bed-ridden she paid constant attention to each and every minute detail of arrangement for Swamiji’s comforts. Such is the regard illumined souls bear towards one another. Swamiji brackets her with Ma Anandamayi. In his own words - “Mother Krishna Bai is just like the affectionate Anandamayi Ma with no other parallel that I know of.”

29. OBEDIENCE IS GREATER THAN REVERENCE

Once on an *Ekadasi* day Swamiji was a guest at Santi Ashram. It so happened that on that day Swami Omkar sent some dishes through Jnanesvari Mataji with a request that Swamiji should partake of at least some items from the same. Swamiji who does not take any solid food on such days smiled and, to the surprise of his own devotees there, started taking the food from the dishes as Prasad. Next day, however, he fasted again. The subtle *Vichara* displayed in the act is noteworthy.

In obedience to the wishes of a senior Mahatma, first of all he meekly submits and violates his own discipline. But the very next day he voluntarily imposes the same discipline on himself again.

30. RECIPROCATING GRATITUDE

In course of Swamiji's many tours in Orissa he used to hear about the mystic saint, Sri Baya Baba, the Namacharya, who was a *Mouni Sadhak* for more than twelve years. Baya Baba is the spiritual successor of Babaji Sri Ram Das Maharaj and founder of the Kalpataru Ashram at Bhubaneswar. Babaji earnestly and humbly requested Swamiji to grace his Ashram to inaugurate the birth centenary celebrations of his holy master Sri Ram Das Maharaj. Swamiji gave his consent happily and went there again for the inaugural function. At the end of the programme, as usual, Swamiji came to Babaji and in his habitually polite way begged Baba's grace. At this the elder Babaji who was then almost bed-ridden stood up in reverential gratitude, despite physical strain, literally bowed down at Swamiji's feet. That was Baba's answer to Swamiji's prayer.

Thus does Chidananda shine in the company of saints who bestow upon him their immeasurable love and regard. Recognition from saints is, indeed, the most significant testimony to a holy man's attainment.

31. TEACHING IN THE DISCIPLE'S MOULD

One fine morning at Sri Samadhi Shrine, Swamiji Maharaj was giving special Darshan. One devotee came and requested "Swamiji, I have learnt that Br. Rama Swaroopaji is out of station, hence if Swamiji permits me, I can come and stay at Gurunivas and serve Swamiji".

Swamiji told him, "You see, at Gurunivas my staff is overflowing, hence you may please help Swami Adyatmanandaji for *Sadhana Saptah*, as he is working all alone. But Swami Adhyatmanandaji very politely turned down the offer saying Swamiji Maharaj desires to make good use of this devotee, but I am afraid that he may '*misuse*' me. Swamiji remained passive at that time.

After a day, Swamiji Adayatmanandaji requested Swamiji to kindly instruct one particular foreign devotee not to pressurise him for getting admission in Sadhana Saptah where actually she was not likely to participate seriously.

Swamiji without raising his head replied, "Yes, I don't mind instructing her but why are you '*misusing*' me ?

It was really a wonderful way to teach me a lesson that we should not expect someone to do what we do not like to do ourselves.

32. DEFINING THE GOOD

Through his soul stirring Bhajans and discourses, Swamiji injected into the listeners the nectarine drugs that had been so carefully prepared in the Sivananda Laboratory. His brief message to the conference was: “The light of life is Guru’s teachings. The strength of life is the Divine Name. The secret of success in life is trust in God. Dharma is the basis of life. Wealth of life is virtue. The greatest treasure is devotion to the Lord. The key to peace and blessedness is meditation. The way to supreme fulfilment is Divine Life. Reflect over what has been said, understand well its meaning. Follow them in daily life. Thus become blessed.”

33. THE GREEN GUESTS

During one of the *Sadhana Saptah*, Swamiji was found a bit tired and yawning all the time. We inquired about his health from his attendant Brahmachari. We learnt from him that Swamiji was on fast for the last three days and did not even drink water.

Guru-Purnima, *Sadhana-Saptah* and holy *Aradhana* festival are very busy days for the inmates. Hence the inmates had forgotten to water the plants.

Swamiji noted that plants were drying out and taught us a lesson by fasting. He said, “You bring all these plants from around the world and plant them in front of my residence. Naturally they are guests of the Ashram. Now without feeding (watering) them how can I, the host, eat or drink? *Atithi Devo Bhava* (The guest is God).

34. VEDA SWARUPA

Like mother Ganges he is cool and sweet, moving deep and silent, nourishing the vast stretches of this *Punya Bhumi*. Naradanandaji says - “You have lost Sivananda. But you have found Sivananda in Chidananda. In broadmindedness and selflessness Chidananda is the same as Sivananda. Chidanandaji never took lessons on Vedantic texts. But his discourses are filled with Vedic wisdom. He is *Veda Swarupa*.”

35. CHIDANANDA - GIRIDHARI

There is the story of Giridhari for whom history may not have any time to space. Swamiji looked after Giridhari more than what he could have perhaps done for his dearest disciple. For twenty years or more the patient was unable to walk and Swamiji was sending him food and looking after him in every possible way all these years.

He used to send the best available medicines and small little presents every now and then from far off America to the poor little hut of Giridhari.

Mother Yvonne Lebeau, who chanced to find him in that wretched condition, did her best to preserve his life. The patient was so adamant that he refused to take even orange juice or grape juice. But the moment he was given to understand that Swamiji would return soon and that if he

wished to remain alive to see Swamiji, he had to take at least the liquid fruit juice, he at once yielded.

Then a miracle did happen. It so happened that Swamiji came back to Ashram two and half months ahead of the schedule.

Swamiji went to Dhalwala to see Giridhari. He sat nearby and softly said “You can leave your body now. You can go in peace.” Giridhari remained cheerful for sometime and then left his mortal coil.

36. LOVING SERVICE

There was a Punjabi monk suffering from dangerous advanced form of leprosy. He kept rolling on the road for some days and then requested a teacher of the local school one day to carry him to the *Sivanandashram*. Being aided by the teacher the patient managed to reach the gateway of the *Ashram* when it was already 10 P.M. The night *Satsang* was about to be over when the news came to Swamiji that a patient was waiting for him. With a torch light in hand Swamiji walked out to the spot where the patient was lying and saw his pitiable condition. Immediately he carried him to the verandah of the *Yoga Sadhana Kutir* and sent a word to *Gurudev* seeking his permission to accommodate the patient inside the *Ashram*. The Master himself felt overwhelmed with a sense of pity, and granted the necessary permission.

Swamiji then began nursing the patient with such love and care as hardly a mother could surpass. He carried on this *Seva* for months together combining the roles of friend, doctor, nurse, cook and sweeper. He even cleaned the excreta of the unfortunate creature. When the barber refused to cut his hair, he himself did the job.

Gurudev commented that Swamiji had wrought a miracle. The diseased monk, who was given up as a lost case by every one else was now able to walk about and take his bath himself. *Gurudev* said with great appreciation, “Chidanandaji has given him a new lease of life through his loving service.” He added that he himself could have hardly served the patient with such fullness of devotion.

37. BE DIVINE AND LIVE DIVINELY

At one Divine Life Conference, Swamiji gave his clarion call: ‘Wake up from the sleep of self-forgetfulness, your *Sadhana* should be simply never to forget the sweet relation with the Lord.’ In a ringing voice he declared, “God is ever in me. I am ever in God”, and then added, “to be divine and to live divinely is natural to you. Be yourself and refuse to be anything other than yourself”.

Such simple words of wisdom, saturated with sincere appeal and graciousness had an incalculable impact on the listeners. Many in the audience felt that the shower of spiritual instruction was not merely refreshing and stimulating, it also directly transmitted Swamiji’s divine grace to them. In his concluding address Swamiji cautioned the listeners not to waste the rare human birth which is meant for God-realisation. In a solemn voice Swamiji said, “With every sunrise and sun-set time is fleeting. Every moment is passing away. All jubilation is, therefore,

misplaced. Enquire - One year has gone away; What have I done? Having attained the rare human birth, what am I doing? *Swadharna* of the river is to flow towards the sea. *Swadharna* of *Jiva* is to meet the Source. The great duty of *Jivatma* is to return Home.”

38. DIVINE SCALES

In his searching message to the *Sadhaks*, Swamiji said, “Yes, my beloved friends! The divine scales weigh human actions not only by the measures of the prayer recited and *Mantras* chanted, not only by the measures of candles lit, lights waved, bells rung and books read, but let me tell you clearly that the divine scales measure man by the quality of the feelings harboured in the heart, by the very words with which you speak and address your neighbours and by each and every simple action of yours in your dealings with all those amongst whom Providence has decreed that you live your life.” The compassionate messenger of God in these words revealed the purpose for which God has sent us to this earth plane.

39. INJECTING DIVINITY

Swamiji has dedicated his life to awaken humanity at large, and the blessed citizens of India in particular. Through a number of conferences all over India he has rendered the divine service of awakening the people into a renewed awareness of the true purpose of life - the manifestation of divine perfection and spiritual beauty that lies latent in the real and eternal inner being of the individual souls. He has knocked loud on doors of the bounden souls to bring into them a flood of cosmic sun-shine. He has strained hard both for the inner unfoldment and its active outer expression which alone can, provide the proper corrective to the chaotic and confused state into which mankind has led itself with its blind pursuit of sense-gratification.

40. PASSION FOR SERVICE

“Swamiji was once travelling in a taxi with two of his colleagues from the Ashram. It so happened that on the way they found some one lying on the road, badly injured all over the body. The taxi driver, of course, would take no notice of it and rushed forward in his usual speed. But Sri Swamiji quickly observed the scene and asked the driver to stop the vehicle. They got down and on enquiry found that the man was injured due to some accident and was lying in a helpless condition. Sri Swamiji was ready immediately to lift the patient into the vehicle so that he might be taken to the nearest hospital. But the driver would not allow it for he feared that the police would regard him as the culprit and haul him up under the impression that his own vehicle might have been the cause of the accident. What was the alternative for Swamiji? He offered the driver the fare due to him and asked him to go his way, preparing himself with his two companions to lift the patient and go walking to the nearest hospital, whatever the distance. The incident needs no comment. The driver was touched to the core and consented to take the patient in the taxi.

41. LIBERATING FROM IMMEDIATE BONDAGE

In course of his global tour once when he was at Amsterdam one afternoon he asked his companions to leave him alone and quietly went to a club which he had been told was the worst den of drug addicts in the city. He slipped in and had a look at all of them. Full of pity and compassion

for them immediately he began praying aloud and begged them with folded hands to give up their bad ways. Some of them went near him and jeered at him. They spoke to him harshly, using very vulgar expressions. One of them took off his own headgear and put it on Swamiji's head. Serene and undaunted, Swamiji continued to pray for them and went on appealing to them to give up the drugs. After the first few moments, after the rough ones had already played some nasty pranks, the sincerity and deep love exuded by Swamiji had the desired effect and they remained uncomfortably quiet. Swamiji told them a few words, prayed for them again, wished them well and left the place. The very next day one of the addicts came to him in a most repentant and chastened mood and attended Swamiji's *Satsang*. He was so moved by Swamiji that he gave up all intoxicants from that day. He narrated to others how roughly they had treated Swamiji and how had lovingly and patiently Swamiji bore it all, and Christ-like, continued to pray for their welfare.

Swamiji says that for men of base desires *Moksha* is a distant dream. The more immediate liberation to be sought for them is to keep them away from stealing, drinking, hypocrisy and falsehood.

42. PLUCK WITH DEVOTION

Swamiji's consideration extends even to the world of plants. On the *Mahasivaratri* Day when devotees in the Ashram go to collect "*Bilva Patra*" for the worship of the Lord Siva, he advises them not to proceed towards the tree with an upraised axe, for the tree would be terrified. They are to approach the tree tenderly, even meekly, and beg for the leaves, as it were. The plucking must be done with tenderness, love and devotion.

43. LORD'S NAME WORKS WONDERS

Once he was a guest of mother Savitri Nilakanthan at Calcutta. Savitri Mataji had a lovely pet dog with a charming coat of hair. For some months before Swamiji's visit it was suffering from an incurable disease. All its hairs fell off and it was reduced to a skeleton. The disease did not respond to the best medical attention available in the city. Savitri Mataji mentioned to Swamiji the pitiable condition of the dog. On hearing the details Swamiji asked for the dog to be brought there. He took it on his lap, patted it tenderly and as it lay there on his laps he chanted *Mahamrityunjaya Mantra* for its speedy recovery. To the surprise of everyone in the family the dog recovered in a few days without the administration of any medicines.

* * *

Once in the Ashram, while Swamiji was doing Kirtan, an American visitor came in and quietly placed before him a tiny tender bird with wings resembling betel leaves. Obviously he had picked it somewhere outside in that half dead condition. When the Kirtan was over Swamiji's eyes fell on the bird. In a voice charged with sadness and compassion he intoned, "Ah! who brought it here?" and then placed it on his palm and started reciting *Mahamrityunjaya Mantra*. The little bird was, as though, given a new lease of life and flew away freely after sometime.

44. TENDER LOVE FOR TINY CREATURES

His cult of non-violence is extended even to the small irritating insects like bugs and mosquitoes whom people kill almost by reflex action and do not feel any qualms whatever. Swamiji endures their stings and allows them to have their own way with his body. Once while he was doing *Kirtan* of the Lord's Name, a disciple saw a mosquito sitting on his body and attempted to drive it out. Before he could reach him Swamiji indicated by sign not to disturb the creature. After the *Kirtan* was over Swamiji told him, "The hungry one having appeased its hunger goes away automatically; you need not drive it out."

* * *

There was an incident at Kotdwar. While Swamiji was giving his address a poisonous insect flew towards him. Yogesh Bahugunaji, a devotee in his company, at once attempted to drive it out. Swamiji, who was then seriously engaged in making an important point, did not lose sight of this. He signalled to Bahugunaji to leave the insect alone and continued his talk. After sometime he took the insect tenderly and got it seated on his palm, assuring it perfect security, as it were. This is the unique *Brahmi Sthiti* of the sage who in spite of all his busy schedule in *Vyavahara* is constantly vigilant to observe *Ahimsa* and love for all creatures at all times.

45. SUPREME LOVE FOR NATURE

Swamiji's love for nature and environment is incomparable. Once at his welcome function organisers hang up fresh branches of trees and creepers for decoration on the stage. Swamiji was deeply shocked. He expressed his utter dismay at this and said: 'It looks like a mutton shop, where one can find dead animals hanging'. Whatever he sees or perceives are different forms of living God and nothing else.

46. VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM

Once Swamiji was on the platform of the Guntur railway station. When the train was about to start he got into the compartment but as the train began to move he saw an old lady crying on the platform lamenting that she was not able to bring out her luggage. Swamiji at once asked one of his party to pull the chain. The train stopped. The old lady collected her bag and baggage and left the platform without knowing as to how the train had stopped. Swamiji stood at the gate of the compartment and when the guard reached there to enquire about the matter he addressed the guard with folded hands, and said, "Please excuse me. Noticing the helplessness of the old lady I gave instruction for this chain-pulling." The totality of his conduct during that small time, the sincerity, the politeness, the feeling for others, much more than the act proper were highly instructive. For Swamiji the whole universe is a big family where each one in his environment is responsible to all others.

* * *

Once when Swamiji was present in the Delhi station a large number of devotees had crowded there for his Darshan and blessings. While in the midst of the milling crowd his eyes fell on an old lady carrying a heavy load on her head, clutching a trunk and moving with great difficulty. Swamiji at once pushed aside the devotees and rushed near her. He spoke to her in a tender voice, snatched from her hand the heavy load and began walking by her side to carry it to the destination. Then, of course, a devotee came forward and took the trunk from Swamiji's hands and carried it for the old lady. The event, again, may appear to be very ordinary. But the manner of doing the service, the natural grace, the spontaneity and the polite way in which it was done made the act memorable.

47. SHARING THE HUMOUR

Swamiji is normally always on tour. Practically 2/3 of the year he is out for his *Jnana Seva-Yatra*. Sri Ma Anandamayi has a beautiful expression about all-time engagement in *Seva-Yatra*. She used to say at Sivananda Ashram:

Swami Madhavanandaji is Bhakti Line wale BABA
Swami Krishnanandaji is Jnana Line wale BABA
Swami Chidanandaji is AIR LINE wale BABA

* * *

Swami Chidanandaji was once camping at Sivananda Ashram, Ahmedabad. Mr. Ravi Kapoor, a staunch devotee from Bombay offered Rs. 5001/- at the lotus feet of Gurudev who in turn gave that amount to Sri Laxmikantbhai Dave, then President of the local branch. Sri Laxmikantbhai with a gentle smile on his face politely refused to accept the sum and offered it back to Swamiji for utilizing at headquarters only. At this Swamiji made an interesting statement and said to all *Gurubhais* present there that 'Voh Lete Nahi Kyonki Inhe Hajaro Nahi Lakho Rupaye Chahiye!' (He does not accept this because he wants not thousands but lakhs of rupees!).

48. BEHOLDING TRIPUTI AS ONE

Swami Chidanandaji was presiding over the Spiritual and Cultural Conference held at Ahmedabad in Feb. '91, the first year of Divine Decade. Three jain Sadhus (brothers) popularly known as *Bandhu-Triputi* were among the several distinguished invitees for the programme. During the course of programme, *Bandhu-Triputi* was felicitated by offering garlands and some momentos to all three Sadhus. The kind and compassionate Triputi expressed their gratefulness and declared that they would retain one set of garland and momento as a token of love and they expressed their desire to present the remaining two sets, one each to Swami Adhyatmanandaji and Swami Ramsvarupanandaji who had been very faithful and ardent devotees of Swami Chidanandaji. At the end, revered Swamiji had to sum up the session. Swamiji began his inspiring address with a humble note of apology saying that it was our mistake that we considered *Bandhu-Triputi* as 3 persons and not as one single entity.

49. CONFESSING TRUTHFULLY

During *Kumbhmela* at Haridwar vaccination was compulsory. Ashram's Ear-driver Sri Omprakasji went to receive Swamiji at the late Sri Kaul Saheb's bungalow at Dehradun. When they were returning from Dehradun, the driver informed Swamiji about compulsory vaccination for all and that after vaccination an appropriate certificate also had to be obtained.

On hearing this a doctor who was accompanying Swamiji took out the letterheads and prepared three certificates. Upon inquiry about the required certificates, the papers prepared during the journey were shown. Inspector permitted the car with Ashram's flag to move further after satisfying himself.

But Swamiji is Swamiji. He called that inspector, gave him some *Prasad*, literature and told the truth to him "Ohji! look here, we are holding certificates only without being vaccinated. This is just for your kind information. The doctor may write up certificates in this manner, but I am a monk, I can't. *Andar Bahar Sama Kari Jane, Sohi Sahebko Pahechane.*

50. NATURE ALWAYS FULFILS THE CHANGE

Revered Swamiji was talking to a group of devotees at local Shivananda Ashram, Jodhpur Tekri, Ahmedabad in 1985 regarding the development of Ashram site. He was talking in particular to then Sri Laxmikantbhai Dave, a pioneering devotee. Revered Swamiji was keen to ensure that more and more *Gurubhais* join the august task of building the ashram. He politely spoke to Sri Laxmikantbhai, that you lower down one or more steps from active administration to bring in new and enthusiastic devotees to join the vital task. If need be, you may retire from the administration and provide spiritual leadership in the setup. He then quoted a poem of Lord Tannison which meant that change is inherent in nature. And the nature always fulfils the change. Total silence then prevailed following the words of Swamiji.

What a revealing dialogue and a glorious piece of admonition!

51. BE VIGILANT EVER

While addressing devotees in a Shibir at Baroda, Swami Chidanandaji referred to one book titled '*Ekant Man Adhyayan*' authored by Swadiaji describing his experiences while performing Sadhana in a small kutir on hilly roads. Swamiji cited one good quote from the book '**Nazar Haft, Durghatna Ghati**', meaning thereby that lapse in attentive vision, is prone to lead to an accident. This cautionary words were displayed on highway full of public and military traffic. Swadiaji expounded in his book that the admonition applies to all *Sadhaks* as much as to bus and truck drivers.

Swamiji appreciated the thoughtfulness of Swadiaji and explained further that path of *Sadhana* is like a busy highway where one has to be vigilant incessantly from the starting point to the end point because any single lapse of attention could be serious or even fatal. That is why there is a need to constantly keep your self attuned with God or Universal Consciousness while living in this world.

52. ANTARYAMI

Once at Bellary Swamiji made a short visit to the residence of a devotee. After offering prayers and distributing *Prasad* in his usual manner, he left immediately to attend a programme in the town. When he returned to his place of rest after the function he did something which appeared rather strange. He sent his assistant to the residence of the said devotee to bring some hot milk from his house. This was rather very unusual not merely because ordinarily Swamiji never asked for things, but more so because milk was available in plenty there itself. Assistant made a visit to the residence of the devotee and conveyed them Swamiji's wishes. At this the devotee's wife suddenly burst into tears and excitedly ran to fetch the milk from her kitchen. The devotee explained that his wife had been very keen to offer some hot milk to Swamiji when he visited their house earlier in the morning, but considering Swamiji's busy schedule he had forbidden her strongly to make any such requests to Swamiji. The *Bhav*, however, had made its impact, and Swamiji responded to it in due time. Such things may appear to be mere coincidences. But the frequency and the manner of the occurrence force one to conclude much deeper.

53. BALA-KRISHNA

Once a devotee came with his family to the Ashram and requested Swamiji to conduct the *Annaprasana* ceremony of his baby in the Samadhi shrine of Sri Gurudev. The way Swamiji conducted the ceremony made it memorable. The whole act was spiritualised by him. At first he sat down in front of the baby, like an ardent devotee before *Gopala Krishna*. He offered his prayers in his sweet voice to *Bala-Krishna* and with all earnestness and love invited, even begged, the baby to come to his lap and then fed him sweet *Payasam* in a most affectionate and tender manner. He offered the rest of the *Payasam* in the plate as *Prasad* to all assembled there and he himself partook a little of that. To him the baby was not a mere human child, but a pure manifestation of divinity.

54. DEVOTION TRIUMPHS

On the occasion of the fourth All Orissa Divine Life Conference Swamiji was to proceed from Bhubaneshwar to Bhawanipatna by plane. The Secretary of the Bhubaneshwar Branch of the Divine Life Society, Sri Radhasyam Nanda, had arranged a public meeting at Bhubaneshwar to receive Swamiji, but somehow those in charge of Swamiji's tour did not know about the programme and they saw off Swamiji at the air-port. Sri Nanda was disconsolate. He did not, however, have long to suffer. The plane had already moved half the distance, when the pilot turned back saying that there were indications of bad weather ahead. So the plane came back to Bhubaneshwar within the hour. Sri Nanda and other devotees who were undergoing a profound sense of dismay at Swamiji's sudden departure felt greatly relieved to know that he was back. As if he had come for the programme itself. Swamiji straight went to the meeting place and delivered his speech. At the end of the programme, he quietly told Nandaji, "You have so much deep devotion that God forced the aeroplane to come back."

55. STHITA PRAJNA

Swami Chinmayananda, the illustrious saint-scholar, was giving a series of discourses on Gita during his *Gita Jnana Yajna* at Lucknow in 1977. In course of his talk he dealt with the

characteristics of a *Sthita Prajna*, the ideal Godman of the holy scripture. At the end of the talk Prof. Varma who was, indeed, very much impressed, sought an interview with Chinmayanandaji and put the straight question - Is the ideal Godman of Gita a mere scriptural representation or a living reality? Is there anybody in India today who may fittingly be called a *Sthita Prajna*? The erudite monk who is not given to easy praise paused for a moment and then replied with all seriousness and solemnity - Yes. There are such great ones. One is Mother Anandamayi and the other is Swami Chidananda. One should behold them and get sanctified.

56. EQUANIMITY EXEMPLIFIED

Once while Swamiji was at Val Morin (Canada) in the Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre directed by Swami Visnudevananda. Due to a short circuit in the electricity cables his quarters caught fire. By the time he noticed, it was already a huge blaze. He calmly came out of the quarters and knocked on the door of the hall where Swami Visnu was holding a Yoga class. Swami Visnu was surprised to see Swamiji standing there. Swamiji told him to do something about the fire. But Swami Visnu found Swamiji in such a state of total poise that he could not at first believe and thought it to be a joke. The next moment, however, he knew it was true and took the necessary steps to put out the fire. Swamiji lost all his essential articles and many important records in the fire. People present there were, however, astonished to find that Swamiji did not show any signs of sorrow or worry during the entire episode. When he was later asked what his feelings really were at that time, he said that, in fact, he did feel sorry, but it was for a couple of friendly spiders who were his companions in the room and who must have perished in the blaze. What incomparable compassion! What perfect even-mindedness!

57. DUTY FIRST

Swamiji was to go to Calcutta. On the way to the station the party had to cross an overbridge. It was already time and they moved briskly when the other members of his party reached the platform, the train had already arrived, but Swamiji was still on the other side of the overbridge. When some devotees, anxiously ran to locate him, they found him by the side of a blind person. It so happened that the blind man had begged Swamiji to give him something but Swamiji could not give him anything because his bag had already been taken to the platform - nor could he go away without giving him something. The moment the devotees saw him they requested him to kindly make haste for the train might leave any moment. Swamiji did not comment; he only spread his upper garment and begged them all on behalf of the blindman. The devotees poured into the apron, notes and coins. Swamiji collected everything and gave the large amount to the blind man whispering confidentially in his ears that he should be careful with the money. After that he calmly crossed the overbridge, got into his compartment and did a little *Divya Nam Kirtan*. Only then did the train start. Swamiji's unruffled state of mind and his compassion which overpower all considerations of personal difficulty are beautifully illustrated by this incident.

58. GET READY FIRST

Just as Swamiji was going up the stairs, I (Yvonne Lebeun) suddenly ran to him and without any explanation blurted out, "I will go to Rishikesh, everybody can go, why shouldn't I go?"

Swamiji answered coldly : “Of course, anybody can go to India, but you will go only when you are ready.” A little pause, and he asked, “You know Swami Satchidananda? It took him two years of reflection to make sure he could leave Ceylon and go to America, and he is a little bit more evolved than you, don’t you think? The people who were there laughed. ”He for sure, does not look for disciples”, they said.

59. DELAY MIGHT BE FOR THE GOOD

Once Swamiji was in Koln in Germany in the midst of a *Satsang*. At the end of his *Satsang* people crowded around him in great excitement. Swamiji was to catch the plane in a very short time. But while the organisers were anxiously looking at their watches and wondering whether Swamiji would succeed in catching the plane at all, he sat there calmly reciprocating the *Bhav* of the devotees and talking to them. At long last, just as he was getting up, a lady rushed in and requested him to give a little time to bless her dying mother whom she had carried to that place. Swamiji at once went up to the old lady and kneeling down very close to her, offered his prayers to the Lord for her peace. Everybody there felt an extraordinary sensation of joy while Swamiji offered his ardent prayers. And then, only after he had completed this work, he left the place to catch his flight to Switzerland. The organisers were, of course sure, by this time the plane must have left. But it so happened that the plane was late and Swamiji was not to miss it. He might miss a flight, but, in any case, that was not going to be a cause of worry. There was to be no hurry even at the last moment. Till the last second every item was to be well attended and only then was he free to carry on God’s work in Switzerland as per schedule.

60. SURRENDER AND BE SECURED

Swami Chidanandaji teaches us how to become secure. “If we only knew that what God does is always for our good, we would be like the kitten and not like the baby monkey. The baby monkey hangs on to the mother, and when the mother jumps from branch to branch, sometimes it loses its grip, falls down and dies. But the kitten lies down in one corner and cries for the mother. The mother cat comes and takes it away. There is no chance of the kitten falling down.

“We would know that self-effort is made only in order to know that no self-effort is necessary and we would surrender. ‘Thy will be done’ would always be our prayer.

61. DIVINE GRACE

Sri Jagdish Badoni of Baroda writes:

My father came home after 50 days of hospitalisation. He was treated for an illness called Hallucination, in the most modern and well equipped hospital by a galaxy of reputed and experienced medical specialists. At home a top Neurosurgeon regularly attended him. He was receiving the best treatment known in the medical science for this type of sickness. The treatment cost was very heavy, about Rs. 1.4 lacs. Despite all efforts there was no improvement in his mental condition. He was not aware of the present - he would slide back in the past. He was in a strange condition and lost to himself.

As willed by the Divine, in the month of January, 1993 Swami Chidanandaji - my *Gurudev* - came to Baroda, and I went to have his Darshan. By sheer grace Swamiji accepted my request to see my father.

I escorted my father to see Swamiji around 1.45 p.m. While talking to him, Swamiji's face was radiant with his usual benign smile, there was unique compassion and love in his eyes. He took an apple, cut it in to pieces, peeled off its skin and with his own hand, put in the mouth of my father. It was a unique moment. How much love was there! How much compassion was there! My whole being was permeated with joy and happiness - not knowing what was happening.

Soon after I left my father at home, at 3.30 p.m., I received a phone call from my wife, "Pitaji has come back to his normal senses. It is a miracle - Swamiji has done it. He is alright and is talking in sense." She was so excited. My father is still alive and happy and is in full senses. He does not remember at all that he was ever in the hospital and ever had any mental illness.

This great Master, so simple, so child-like, so innocent has done what others could not do. We are blessed to have Him as our *Satguru*.

62. MAHAPUJA

On one occasion, while he was touring the Ganjam district of Orissa, on his way from Balipadar to Buguda, Swamiji saw a group of small boys playing on the road side. He asked the driver to stop the vehicle and brought out a bunch of plantains to be distributed among them. He told Durlabhji to do the job. Durlabhji got down from the car and called the boys aloud to come near and take the plantains. At this the boys fled away, thinking it to be some trap. Swamiji softly admonished Durlabhji for his brusque manner and explained, "The boys do not expect anything from us. Therefore instead of calling them here, you should approach them with *Bhav* and feed them with *Prem*." Durlabhji acted accordingly and then having realised the spiritual import of Swamiji's instructions said, "Swamiji! Now I realise, it was meant to be a *Puja*." At this Swamiji added, "Yes, *Mahapuja*." It is not merely the physical act but the spiritualisation of the very thought process that transforms the feeding into an offering made to the Lord manifested as simple children.

63. MADHAVA IN MADHAVA

Once during his stay at Jyoti Vihar, the Sambalpur University Campus, Swamiji wanted a barber to shave his head. When the barber came, Swamiji politely asked him his name. The barber said that his name was Madhava. Then, to the utter astonishment of the barber, Swamiji prostrated himself at the feet of Madhava who had to serve him as barber. Before he could receive the service of the barber he first of all offered his grateful prayers to the man. When the shaving was over, Swamiji offered him plenty of fruits as *Bhog* and some coins in the form of *Dakshina*. Thus by personal example he imparts the lesson that the seeker should behold *Madhava* in each *Manava* and rise from humanity to divinity.

64. CHIDANANDA IS CHIT-ANANDA

The story of Swami Chidananda has been a story of total divinisation of the human personality. It is a story of silent service and complete self effacement. On the basis of the profound authority of his personal experience and direct intuitive realisation, therefore, this peerless saint of the Himalayas could proclaim to the world of seekers: “Yoga is not only in *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*. It is in every moment.” His life at every moment glows with an immaculate Godliness.

Swami Chidananda is the pure prism radiating the rays of *Sanatana Dharma*. Being an absolutely immaculate holy personality and a realised soul, he is endowed with incalculable spiritual force. His very presence constitutes an uplifting experience, dispels the doubts of struggling seekers and infuses into them a new spiritual vigour.

65. VANDE GURU PARAMPARAM

Swami Chidanandji was addressing a public meeting at Town Hall, Ahmedabad in 1986 in regard to the Centenary Celebrations of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. He explored the real significance behind the centenary celebration in subtler terms. Swamiji emphasized that centenary celebration of revered Gurudev is not simply meant to be an occasion for paying tributes to Gurudev Sivananda, a doctor of body, mind & soul but in a broader and philosophical terms, it is tantamount to paying our gratitude and respects to the entire *Guru Parampara*, our spiritual heritage and lineage of which he was a shining representative.

*Sadasiva Samarambham Sankaracharya Madhyaman,
Asmad Acharya Paryantam Vande Guru-Paramparam.*

I bow and pay homage to this long line of succession of *Gurus* that originated from Sankar Bhagvan Himself and that had in its middle Sankara Acharya, and to this day I pay homage to my own Guru, who is to me the present representative of this spiritual lineage.

66. BEAR INSULT, BEAR INJURY

Once Swamiji was moving by train through North India. As usual, he did some Kirtan on the platform praying for the welfare of others and when the train began to move he got into his compartment. By that time some rich businessman had come in and having thrown out Swamiji's bed was comfortable on the berth allotted to Swamiji. Swamiji heard the man sarcastically telling Sri Ram Ratanji a devotee accompanying him, that somebody must have donated the first class fare to the Swami. As the indignant Ram Ratanji was about to retort, Swamiji meekly said that the Sethji was correct and that, being a *Sannyasi*, he need not have the comfort of a cushion. So saying, he spread his bed on the floor by the side of the berth and lay down there. The unruffled contented manner in which Swamiji meekly forfeited his legal claim over the berth had immediate effect on the Sethji who came to know that he was dealing with an extraordinary person and repentantly begged Swamiji to excuse him and prayed him to come back to his berth. In such a situation anybody of lesser equanimity and humility would have demurred or made a scene. Swami Chidananda who had undergone total self-effacement did not think that there was any occasion to be vexed or agitated. And now there was again an exemplary gesture. When he saw that the Sethji

was full of sincere remorse, instead of obstinately remaining on the floor he quietly went over to the berth without any fuss.

67. KNOW AND THEN SEEK

Mike, a young Australian boy, came to see Swamiji. He walked up to Swamiji, planted himself in front of him and said, “I want you to be my *Guru*”. Swamiji smiled, put up his hand.

“Wait, wait now. When you want to marry a girl, you don’t just throw her over your shoulder and walk away. You court her, you get to know her, she gets to know you, then you take a decision. She also has to take the decision, whether to accept you or to refuse you. It is the same with the *Guru*. You have seen me for the past month or so, you feel attracted to me, you feel elevated, happy, that is good. But you must wait, and after a good, thorough study of me, then you will decide.”

And I (Yvonne Lebeau) was made to wonder. I remembered someone telling me: “He is the only one I know who does not look for disciples”. Others had told me: “Swamiji says he is not a *Guru*. And when he has to give an initiation, he says, ‘I do it in the name of my Master. Now Sivananda is your Master’.”

68. RIGHT IDENTIFICATION

Swami Chidanandaji does identify all well meaning devotees. But his vision and perception could be different and deeper than ours. One fine evening Swamiji was descending the stairs of Vishvanath temple at Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh. One aged and senior devotee offered loving *Pranams* to Swamiji and anxiously looked at the Swamiji in anticipation of a few words from His Holiness. Swamiji greeted the devotee with a pleasant smile and gently folded hands. The devotee could not contain himself and broke his silence by saying that Swamiji, did you not recognise me? True to his genuine divine being, Swamiji replied at once “I definitely know you as an immortal *atman*, but if you want identification of this body, you would have to tell me.” The atmosphere all around was rent with divine vibrations and joy.

69. SAY NO TO ‘NO’

When devotees tell Swamiji to learn to put people out and to learn to say ‘No’, he humbly excuses himself. He says: “Nothing is my own, not even my time; it belongs to you all, it belongs to God.”

We all laughed when one day an American sent Swamiji a cardboard on which was beautifully printed a big ‘No’. A note was with it, which said, “If you can’t say ‘No’, just put this on your chest and walk around with it.”

We laughed, but in reality we knew that Swamiji always knew how many were the despairing ones who found hope again and were saved because he alone found time to listen.

70. SHARING THE INSPIRATION

Many years after Swamiji's final renunciation when he was already the President of the Divine Life Society, the day following his 49th birthday, on the 25th September, 1965, he happened to be at Haridwar. Suddenly he dispatched two cars to the Sivanand ashram at Rishikesh with a request to about ten inmates, among them Swami Krishnananda, Swami Madhavananda, Swami Dayananda, Swami Premananda and Narasimhulu, to come to Haridwar to meet a great saint. They all came with eager anticipation to meet the *Mahatma*. To their surprise and uneasiness, Swamiji led them all into a cinema hall and declared that he would like them to meet there Sant Jnaneswar. It was only then that the senior inmates of the Ashram realised the somewhat playful nature of the invitation. But Swamiji was pretty serious about it and narrated to them how greatly he had been inspired by that very film in his early days. He thought this was the best personal offering he could make them on his birthday.

71. MENTAL PEACE REIGNS HIGHER

Swami Chidanandaji was about to begin his inspiring address around midnight in a specially erected *Samiana* at Shivanandanagar Headquarters, Rishikesh. After finishing the recitation of *Nama Japa* and *Kirtan*, he took a pause for a while and requested the person in charge of stage management to put off the large size fan kept on the corner of the stage. The fan was emitting peculiar friction stricken sound. Swamiji uttered a few words in very low voice. "It is good to have mental peace even with physical discomfort than to have physical comfort with lot of mental restlessness". Swamiji then went on to deliver an inspiring address. But one thought, the quintessence was already delivered in his beginning phrase itself when the audience was awaiting a thrilling discourse from Swamiji.

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Swami Chidanandaji was about to deliver a public address at huge gathering in an open ground. Due to some noise in the amplifier system, the microphone started emitting peculiar buzzing continuous sound. Swamiji kept smiling and said the microphone wants to say something. It is probably practising *Bhramari Pranayams*.

72. STORE-HOUSE OF ENERGY

Once in the West, after a very long talk during one of his fasting periods, Swamiji fainted and fell; but very quickly gathering himself together, he got up, drank a little water, excused himself for the interruption and went on with his talk.

The doctors were all very impatient with him in the West. The greatest ones said, "No one could have enough energy left even to digest food while doing the work he does". And they added, "Talking is what requires most energy too". They wonder at him.

73. BEFRIENDING ANIMALS

Remembering the stories about St. Francis, I remembered how, in Val Morin, in Canada, Swamiji would walk on a stony path, a long way round, because in walking on the grass he would have killed the many crickets we heard singing all day.

I also remembered how I had once seen Swamiji save a spider that was drowning in a swimming pool.

To Swamiji, birds, beasts and insects are veritable embodiments of *Brahman* and not what we make out of them. This is his attitude. This is his *Bhav*. It is this *Bhav* which characterizes his attitude towards them, his behaviour towards them.

One day in the Ashram, a crow was badly mauled by a monkey. When Swamiji heard about it, he immediately had its wounds dressed up and then had it removed to the safety of the underground meditation chamber below the Dattatreya Temple in the Ashram to prevent the bird from being molested further. And Swamiji served it for many month as though it was his own child.

74. ASCEND GRADUALLY

Like his Master before him, Swamiji says that the practitioners of Yoga are so enamoured of the glowing descriptions that are given of the state of one advanced in Yoga, that they are impatient to get at that state, but not willing to abide by the conditions prerequisite to it. The slow processes of preparation and purification are ignored, or negligently skipped over, and consequently they come to grief. And then they seek to lay the blame at the wrong doer. In *Yoga*, the instructions regarding *Yogic* discipline, dietetic restrictions, moderation, purity and self-restraint are all actually meant to be followed to the very letter.

75. REALISED SOULS DO NOT SAY SO

In a provincial Divine Life Conference a certain devotee asked him with sincere and deep fervour, “I want to be initiated by a realised soul. Are you, Sir, a God-realised Soul?” Swamiji replied, “I am only a servant of *Gurudev* and an unworthy slave of God. I do not know if I am a God-realised soul or not. God alone knows this”. Kenopanishad (II.3) has precisely stated that the God-realised seer has not the slightest ego to announce that he has realised God. The words of Swamiji in the light of the revealed scripture indicate not only a person of supreme spiritual attainments but also one who has entirely surrendered everything including his very Self at the feet of God and *Gurudev*.

76. COMPASSION INCARNATE

Swamiji worked wonders everywhere he went.

He dried the tears of a fallen girl. Now she writes to me (Yvonne Lebeau): “I am reading the life of Lord Buddha. He is alive for me, because I see Him in Chidanandaji. I remember his eyes of compassion. Everything is changed for me...”

“I remember how he said, ‘You are a child of God and you are so precious to Him. God sees no sin but ignorance on the way. You are a mother. Would you stop loving your daughter if she failed, if she failed in the terrible circumstances which brought you to such a life?’”

“He said, ‘Your suffering can become a blessing if it helps you to understand others. You will be enabled in little acts of kindness, in little deeds of love, in the seemingly unspiritual things, the common duties of life, to serve the poor with tears in your eyes.’”

“I have read in the Gita: ‘When you have no lust and no hate in your heart, you may safely walk among the things of lust and hate’”.

“This day will come for me, it is coming even now and all this because of his compassion and love.... he is the incarnation of compassion!”

77. SERVING UNTO THE LAST

On one occasion, two little boys caught a squirrel and brought it to Swamiji. They had so much trouble during their two days’ train journey keeping the squirrel alive and happy. When they offered it to Swamiji, the squirrel ran onto Swamiji’s shoulders, climbed onto his head, nosed around him and then settled on his shoulder. The little boys were thrilled. Swamiji and the squirrel seemed to know each other. The little squirrel never tried to run away.

But one day, as Swamiji was standing beside a tree, the squirrel on his shoulder, the little thing jumped onto the tree and disappeared into the foliage. As the children were looking up the squirrel fell down, dead. Some monkeys hiding in the tree had killed it. Swamiji picked up the little body, put it tenderly on a piece of cloth, and praying all the time, went down to the Ganges. The children followed, other inmates joined in, for wherever Swamiji goes, everyone goes. It was the lunch hour, the bell struck, but no one paid any heed until Swamiji had offered the last funeral rites to the little squirrel, and consigned its body to the holy Ganges.

These actions of Swamiji make realise that a mere study of the *Vedantic* books without practice is absolutely useless.

78. WORDS OF LOVE AND GRATITUDE

Swami Venkatesanandaji, the famous chronicler of the Ashram in Gurudev’s times, addressed Swami Chidanandaji in a felicitation in 1954 with the following words: “Blessed is the land that has given birth to a *Mahapurusha* like you. Blessed are the people who are fortunate enough to enjoy your *Satsang* even for a while. Blessed is the age in which you have chosen to incarnate on this earth.

Swami Harisharanandaji, another veteran disciple of Gurudev, called to their attention special thing. Swami Chidanandaji does the funeral rites of even cats and monkeys: he chants *Mantras* and does *Kirtan*. This is *Nishkamyā Seva*. This is supreme cosmic love. Chidanandaji is filled with the feeling that whoever comes in contact with him is *Narayana*“.

79. REPLYING IN STYLE

While coming at Barlogunj, Mussoorie, one mid-day, before lunch Swamiji noted and talked about the damage caused to one book. Swami Adhyatmanandaji for the sake of fun, replied in American slang, “Swamiji, please do not worry, we will **chipkaofy** it (stick properly with glue). Swamiji just glanced from the top of his specs.

Sri Kiran Tripathy (one devotee) was asked to go to the market for some purchase, but upto late evening he did not return. Swami Adhyatmananda had to go back to his training camp, hence he remarked to Swamiji, “Market is not very far and work also is not much. Why has Kiran not returned so far?”

And Lo! without waiting for a single second Swamiji also replied in American slang, “You see, he is a young man, he must be **ghooming** (roaming)!!! Swamiji is child-like, pure and simple. There is no intention of caricature but it is all spontaneous, just natural fun. Swamiji is a personification of guilelessness.

80. LIFE DIVINE

Swami Chidananda serves indefatigably, through all hours and all seasons. He serves the Lord in this cosmic form. He serves his Master through the divine mission. He lives in the world of Rama. How Rama came into his life is an instructive lesson to every seeker. To him in his childhood, He came as the idol Kodanda Rama, whom he worshipped and in whom he had his whole being. At a later stage, He came to him in the shape of the unfortunate lepers. Then a time came when the Lord appeared before him in the form of the inspired words of Ramdas. Next, the life of Ramakrishna Paramahansa rose before him as a beckoning ideal. Saints and mystics blessed him. At last, the Lord gave him Darshan in the form of his *Sadguru*. Sivananda entered into his very being. He was filled with devotion to *Guru*. Sivananda dwelt in him and he dwelt in Sivananda. The two became one. In the words of Swami Krishnanandaji: “The legacy which he (Chidanandaji) has imbibed from Sri Gurudev is hundred percent. We see in him all the miraculous and wondrous character of Gurudev.”

THE PRAYER OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

“Lord, make me an instrument of Thy Peace!

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is discord, union;

Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light,

AND

Where there is sadness, joy.
Oh Divine Master, grant that I may not
so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life."

SRI SIVANANDA ASHRAM AHMEDABAD

Swami Sivanandaji a practical Vedantin sage established the Divine Life Society in 1936 at Sivanandanagar, Rishikesh. With the advent of time, over 300 branches of the Society have come up the world over to pursue the work initiated by Gurudev Sivananda and guided by his worthy disciple, Swami Chidanandaji, President of the Society since 1963.

The Ahmedabad branch has been one of the active branches of the society. One staunch devotee of Gurudev, Swami Pavitranandaji, formerly Laxmikant Daveji had a great love and devotion for Gurudev's mission and he aspired to bring up an Ashram at Ahmedabad on lines parallel to the headquarters for the larger benefit of the people of Gujarat in particular. Swami Chidanandaji bestowed his abundant grace and blessings and he performed *Bhoomi Pooja* of the four acres of land granted by Government of Gujarat to Sri Divya Jivan Sanskritik Sangh at Jodhpur Hill, Ahmedabad for conducting educational, cultural and spiritual activities in the spirit of brotherhood of mankind. Swami Chidanandaji inaugurated the *Santkutir* in 1984 and *Seva-Sadhak-Kutir* in 1991 towards this cause. Swami Pavitranandaji consecrated himself to the cause of Gurudev's mission and left for heavenly abode on 7th, September '93.

Blessed by Swami Chidanandaji, Swami Adhyatmanandaji of Headquarters has provided inspiring leadership since then. With the dedicated efforts of Swamiji and generous contribution of all devotees, *Pran-Pratistha* of Sri Vishwanath Temple has been accomplished on 20th May '95, at the holy hands of Swami Chidanandaji. *Sant-kutir* has been expanded to accommodate a large *Satsang* Hall. A fine temple of *Dukhbhanjan Hanuman* stands beside the Vishwanath temple. A nice garden and trees are being cultivated which add to the peace and purity of the sacred space. The Ashram is full of activities which range from Prayer, *Kirtan* and *Satsang* to worship at Lord Vishwanath temple, *Yogasana* camp, *Adhyatmic* library, tailoring class for women, dispensary etc. Some distinctive activities include publication of Divya Jivan magazine, Swami Sivananda *Jnana Yajna Nidhi* and Swami Chidananda *Sarva Jiva Seva Nidhi*. The constructions of Astalaxmi Temple and setting of Yoga Vedanta Academy are the future objectives.

Swami Sivananda strove for integral development of mankind by Yoga of synthesis. You are heartily welcome to Ashram, participate and practise worship, service, meditation or knowledge whatever inspires you.

SRI DIVYA JIVAN SANSKRITIK SANGH.